

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/22/2023 3:10:16 PM

First name: Lucas

Last name: O&#39;Laughlin

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Am a homeowner in Taos Ski Valley and routinely walk the Rio Hondo watershed for hiking and flyfishing and in the years since the Ski Valley began their expanded real estate development I have noticed a significant change in the water quality including more sediment, less fish, and more floating debris such as trash. The new proposed expansion is a great concern to me for the short and long-term environmental impact as well as the water rights and usage for all of the lands down stream from the valley. The initial presumption of water rights in the preliminary EA is incorrect. The EIS must consider the fact that Taos Ski Valley's (TSV) proposals in light of the resort's actual water rights of 21.45 acre-feet, which is limited to 0.11 acre-feet of daily use allowed between April 11th and October 25th. The EIS should analyze an alternative that places TSVI's potential water usage in context of the resort's actual allocated water rights. To not do so is negligent on the part of the EA.

Furthermore, the EA fails to disclose impacts to public lands access. The EIS must consider how the gondola will affect public access to the Williams Lake trailhead. This analysis must include consideration of winter access. Given the likely negative impacts to Wilderness access the Forest Service should deny the base-to-base gondola.

The forest service's decision to not conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that should absolutely include some alternatives to the Proposed Action, places all of the watershed at unknown risk. A through EIS jeez to have optional development plans that include the comparative examination of with and without the base-to-base gondola, and with and without the water tank and booster station.

Just this year is the village was without water which halted resort operations and left many guests and homeowners alike without water. The ski valleys proposal is absolutely premature and would surely cause additional strain on the existing aging infrastructure. The Forest Service should hold off on considering the 5 million gallon water tank, booster station, and new restaurant until the Village of Taos Ski Valley's water infrastructure is stabilized.

Respectfully,

Lucas OLaughlin